1: Herskovits & Herskovits R-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

and forth on the sandy bank to the rhythm of the voicees in the drums, but their gods would not come. They could not dance, they could not find peace while the drums spoke, and so this disconsolate pacing went on week after week, on those days when the river gods might be danced to. Sometimes the pulse of the drumming, quickening for an interval, stirred the dancers. A shudder would go through the body of one or another and the dry throats would fall to uttering the sacred cries, but almost the next instant the hand of the drummer would go limp, and once more the listless, agonized pacing would continue. The gods were angered. When the drums called them from the river bottom, they came grudgingly and remained sullen, refusing to make their wishes known, and no gods or ancestors came to counsel the wise men in their sleep how to bend the will of the spirits of the river.

In the fields the parched earth baked in the merciless heat until it was like whitened bone. The few plants that had pushed their way up through the sandy soil were now brown dust which any wind might scatter. But there was no wind. No rain, no wind, for in the river the god of the wind dwells, and in the sky the rain god, and these gods are twins, and twins have but one soul, since it is with the gods as it is with humans.

No rain, no wind. Famine was upon the land.

At last, at the village of Opoku a woman had a dream. She was a pure albino, one of the type who, together with those who show by the slight turn of red in their wooly hair a strain of albinism, are called Toné people, and are identified with the river gods. To this Toné woman the gods came in sleep, and spoke their will.

"And what was it you gave to the gods?" we asked Sedefo, who had fallen silent at this point in his story.

"Mati," he said, after a pause, "I am not an important man. You ask what I may not tell. My mouth cannot take upon itself to speak what concerns our big men."

This much he would say. A boat filled with things had been sent down the river. Men standing at the river bank

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

"I'll tell you how it is mostly," he went on, after a silence. "Sometimes a woman will lie about the father of her child. The child will grow up keeping the trefu of a strange man. But it won't be his real trefu. His mother, you see, lied about his father. In the end, if nothing is done, this child will be sick, and later he will become a leper. Only a bad woman will lie about her child's father, because only a bad woman will want to hurt her own child. It doesn't happen among the girls who wear kerchiefs and live the way the old people live. These girls dance to the spirits. They are afraid of the ancestors. They are afraid of their *akra*—their soul—and the Earth Mother. But those girls who wear hats—ai, Massa, those girls do anything!"

But here in the bush, it seemed, they had other beliefs about leprosy, he went on. Here they believed it was a kind of a spirit, too. When a leper died he was not given a good burial. No wakes were held for him. He was given no coffin. He was buried in the Bad Bush, where the sorcerers were thrown.

"When a leper dies, they don't want him to come back again. They don't treat his spirit well. They do the same with him as with a madman. They bury him with no more ceremony than a child, who came on earth, and would not stay. They say it's all because of a bad spirit, and they don't want bad spirits on earth."

4

"Why do we plant away from the village?"

It was the old woman talking, as we sat and smoked with her. The moon had come up above the maripa palm trees behind the house where the leper had been helped into his hammock, and it was pleasant out-of-doors.

"Why, you ask? Well, sometimes when the bush is burned, a wind comes up suddenly, and sends the flames, down, down, beyond the cleared ground. How would it be with a village, if we cleared our grounds too close to it, and this happened? No, Bak'a, we people of the bush know better. . . . What do you say? Why do we do our clearing

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

643 159 In our own terms, if we were to picture the Granman as a splendid savage, cheerful, guileless, childlike, flattered by our interest, we would be belying his gifts of sophistication, and he would thank us little for these romantic outlines which, according to the values of his own civilization, would be insulting.

829 [538] 796 The code of life among these people was expressed in the proverb we had heard often spoken. "There are men on the upper river, there are men on the lower river, too." For survival in this bush, a man needed to match his strength and his wits and his magic, his kindliness and his enmity against those of any other. And the Bush Negro is a realist, for, as we had seen, not even the gods could be depended upon to be consistent—consistently good or consistently evil. The Bush Negro's gods, like humans, often did things for unaccountable reasons, because of a momentary whim, because of a desire to try the untried.

829 181 It was good to be guileless, but sometimes a man had to be a tiger, had to stalk his prey from behind. It was well enough to be a tiger, but sometimes a man needed the cunning of the bush hero, spider Anansi, who knew how to outwit the tiger. It was well enough to be an eagle, and be free and fly high, but sometimes a man needed the wit of the little bird konubri, who became king of all birds, because, when in the kingdom of birds there was a contest for the throne, it was he who, by perching on the back of the eagle, flew highest of all.

643 159 In the simplest of our own terms, Granman Moana Yankuso could be said to be a superb politician. In his villages, marriage alliances were calculated with the nicety of the best statesmanship. Whatever his own views, he saw to it that he never defied the arbiters of magic or the clan of the seat of magic, the Dahomey people. Toward the women of strange villages who came to see the white man and his woman, he showed an easy gallantry, which could not have been but flattering. When addressing the women who carried children astride their backs, he would speak gently to them and call them "mother" in greeting, and

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

these animals. So the hunter is occasionally surprised to find a big cat responding to his game call.

Far up the river, jaguars have been known to come near a provision clearing and carry off an infant while the mother was at work in the cassava field. The grown Djuka, however, is not afraid of these cats. The jaguar is a medium-sized feline, the third largest of the cat family, but it is essentially cowardly. If a lone Negro encounters one on a game trail, a duel commences that usually ends with the shooting of the jaguar. On one occasion we saw a hunter come back from the game trail, armed only with a machete, who had met and killed one of these cats.

There are several smaller cats in the South American jungle, ranging in size from the puma to the diminutive jaguarundi. The boa constrictor is not the menace that some travellers make it out to be. The Bush Negroes will not kill either a boa or an alligator, nor will they allow a white man to do so. If they see the white man aiming his gun at snakes, they will knock up the muzzle. Such reptiles are sacred. Some of the Indians of the district, on the other hand, are fond of snake meat, and hunt it regularly. But the Bush Negroes look down on them.

In setting traps the Bush Negroes exhibit the typical cunning of jungle dwellers. They have preserved the West African types of traps. Trails on which armadillos forage are set with a shotgun, in the middle of the path. By seizing the bait the animal shoots itself.

At night on the game trail the lone hunter builds a lean-

/6 cont./

175 pacified Bush Negroes. From then on they received from the
648 Netherlands Government annual presents consisting of guns, herbs, lead, tobacco, rice, salt, dram, and so forth.

648 In later times, however, these were gradually decreased
829 by the government and finally completely abolished, as a result of which the Negroes no longer so willingly and without remuneration want to be of service to the government; since they believe that with the conclusion of the peace they came to an agreement with the government that on their part the Whites would no longer be hindered in anything, while they would endeavor to assist the government whenever that should be necessary, in return for which the presents mentioned above would be handed out to them annually on the part of the government. At present they complain about their treatment by the government and refuse to believe that they can and may trust the Whites.

101 The Bush Negroes are divided into four tribes: /7/
103 1st. Aucaners, who have their dwelling place, Auca, on the
133 river Marowyne; and they have their working places on the river above Cottica, where they come from the Marowyne by way of the Wanakreek. Among themselves they are called Joeka /Djuka/ and by the Whites, Aucaners, after the plantation Auca, where on 19 October 1760 peace was concluded with them.

2nd. Saramaccaners, who live on the river above Surinam, principally near the waterfall Arasoebanja near Gjengjen and Prakieki, and have their working places along the same river and in the cove /kreek," creek, cove"/ Taaiboto Kouloegrou and Kassipora. They are called Saramaccaners by the Whites, after the river of that name (where they formerly lived), and among themselves Wousie or Moejére.

3rd. Mantoewari, who have their dwelling place on the river above Saramacca and their working places along the same river on Maripaston and in the cove Mindrinetie. They are names like the Saramaccaners, since they, too, although separate, live on the same river.

/33 cont./

439 When, for instance, the Bush Negro has cut down a
437 tree deep in the forest and discovers that it is almost hollow on
313 the inside, then he works it, this defect notwithstanding, into a
186 squared log, taking care to make the visible cavities above and below invisible by hammering wooden pins into it. After that he takes clay and mud and is able to make every trace disappear, a fraud which is thus rarely discovered before a piece is sawed off the log.

Also they practice a great deal of deception by unloading on the buyer as good stuff various qualities of timber of great and little value, but which resemble each other, for instance, by selling a low quality black kabbes (1) for brown hardwood (2),

1. Andira retusa H. B. K.

2. Andira called wassila among the Arrawakken /Arawak/ Indians.

two varieties which can be distinguished only by timber experts.

/34/ If they have worked timber that on one side is already somewhat rotten, or is worm-eaten or split, then they know how to place it in such a way in their rafts that the good side lies upward, a deception that can be discovered only when it has been hauled ashore and one becomes aware of it by turning each piece around and inspecting it carefully.

186 If it is possible to steal something from the Whites,
648 they will not fail to do so. They are also guilty of lying and give themselves the names of those who still possess the confidence of the Whites, which they can do with impunity because the similarity of their coloring and facial features makes it extremely difficult for the Whites to recognize them after an absence.

[829] This repeated trickery has accordingly made the Whites declare them to be scoundrels and liars, but the Bush Negroes, although they do not do so openly, say the same of them and
577 regard themselves as much more trustworthy and honest. That they do this with some appearance of justice cannot be denied; after

/35 cont./

123 466 Also, I am led to believe that for me they cherish a more than general respect, since already for ten years now they have been faithful workers for me, a privilege to which no inhabitant in this colony other than myself can lay claim.

123 778 [761] A family among them, whose head recently died -- according to their statements, through poisoning, which misdeed is supposed to have taken place out of envy, since I gave him preference above others, which he deserved on account of his faithfulness and industry -- has built a hut in the vicinity of its idol signs, in which they placed a crude image cut out of cedar-[237] wood and painted with white paint. Beside that image they placed a little table and on it laid a number of quill feathers from the pouwies (1), a little bottle with black liquid, symbolizing ink,

1. A pheasant, the Crax alector L.

as well as some slips of paper. Near this little table they dug a number of steps into the ground, and at the lowermost step they made a gutter that runs in the direction of the river. Now when they have a festival with dancing and they want to pay respect to me, they place near it a number of children who constantly pour water brought in jugs, which, flowing down the steps into the gutter, streams riverward. While this ceremony takes place, songs in my honor are sung by the festive crowd.

[822] [829] Now the image, according to their conception, is supposed to be a representation of me, /36/ the white color the sign that I am a white, while the quills, paper, and ink are the attributes of the Whites' higher civilization,-the streaming water that I stem from the colonists who have come here from across the sea.

123 589 The wife of the headman referred to above came to me in the town shortly after the death of her husband and remained to choose my household as her permanent residence, to which I gladly consented. Faithful and considerate, she performs not only a great many household services, but even anticipates in this respect the wishes of my wife, and out of love for us refuses any monetary compensation.

B
Q /516 cont./
121 by the effect of medical care, we shall take 1 January 1950 as the
165 date of reference for the calculations of mortality among the Boni.

/517/

II. — Demography of the Boni

Census. — Estimation of Age.

B
125 Method used. The demographic study of the Boni presents the difficulties inherent in all populations without civil records:

1. Difficulty of determining the ages of individuals;
2. Difficulty of determining for each woman the deceased children in relation to the surviving ones.

B
125 We attempted to establish a local chronology by linking the
173 ages of individuals to events of known date that had stuck in their minds.

More particularly we fixed the ages of the old men from the voyage of the explorer Crevaux (1877) and from the death of the grand man Anato (1891), the ages of middle-aged persons from events which occurred between 1915 and 1924, death of the grand man Ochi (1915), end of World War I (1918), hydroplane accident at the mouth of the Inini (1921), installation of a rose-wood factory (1925).

B
125 The persons born after 1930 were placed without difficulty, for we knew a certain number of them as children or adolescents in 1948.

Starting with a certain number of men whose age could be
B fixed with considerable accuracy, all the others, men and women,
829 were placed by comparison. In fact, if the Boni do not know their age, they are able to say that they are, for example, two or three years younger than so-and-so (6).

B
[755] 6. Their attention is brought to bear on these age differences because, if a group isolated in the bush is led to address a prayer to the ancestors for the curing of a sick person, this prayer has to be pronounced by the oldest person.

5: Hurault--23 K1 E-5 (1948-1959) 1959 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Rucuyen SR12
Emerillon SR8

/525 cont./

III. – Demography of the Oayana Indians

B 125 162 361

The inquiry covered the five Oayana villages on the French bank, grouping together 170 persons in December 1957. We were able, moreover, to interrogate most of the women of the villages on the Surinam side, with the result that the actual dimension of the group studied comes to approximately 240 persons (12).

E 101 125 161 E 128

12. In January 1959 we studied the Oyampi and Emerillon Indians of Oyapok, about 190 in number, whose demographic characteristics are very close to those of the Oayana. The data obtained, compared to those concerning the Oayana, are indicated below.

R 621 166

Conditions of the inquiry. The Oayana villages do not have a stable population; a simple disagreement suffices to provoke the departure of a faction, which goes to join another village. About half of the Oayana studied here came from the Yari (Brazil) during the years 1951 and 1952 and have benefited from medical help only since that time. We can therefore acknowledge that the total population has benefited from medical care since 1951.

R 758 [166] R 161

Since 1952, even if the internal composition of the villages has varied, we are dealing on the whole with the same population, which may be regarded as relatively stable.

R 125 [101] [484]

/526/ The inquiry, conducted at three times (December 1956, December 1957, and November 1958), allowed us to cover the whole group except for some units (absent on a journey to Brazil).

B R [648] [829] R [175]

The determination of the ages has been made by comparison with the Boni. Oayana and Boni, acquainted since childhood, can say with precision which ones are close to their age.

Historic guidelines have also been used, notably from the voyage of the explorer Laveau, 1913-1915.

/19 cont./

613 621 571 The principle of localization of matrilineal kin groups, each in a separate village, continues respected. However, as in all African populations, the actual structure is noticeably different from the theoretical organization:

1st. Fragments of paternal kin groups, as well as several small groups of heterogeneous origin, insufficient in number to form a separate unit, have been agglomerated with the lo. Such is the case for example of the Toïna lineage, a small group which fled from Surinam at the end of the 19th century and agglomerated with the Papaïston lo;

[578] 2nd. Scissions have been produced within the lo as a result of disagreements. A group issuing from the Papaïston lo founded Wétiti village in the Lower Maroni beside Apatu. A group issuing from the Kotika lo founded Ma Imma village in the same region. Finally, from the Dipélu II lo a group separated which settled in Asisi. Asisi village is thus in fact nowadays the juxtaposition of three villages: Asisi-Dju, Asisi-Awara Bakka, Asisi-Dipélu II, each having its organization and its separate territory.

[829] These scissions have no appreciable repercussions on the social life of the Boni, for the groups thus separated from the lo, in addition to being very small in numbers, are not recognized by [769] the grand man as distinct social units. They remain subject to the head of the lo to which ancestor worship attaches them.

361 613 621 Besides the residence villages, a certain number of Boni have personal farming habitations distributed on the lands of their lineage along both banks of the river and on the islands. These habitations designated by the word kâpu, camp, have no permanent character; their existence does not violate the principle of localization of the lineage; each Boni is obliged at least in principle to build a house in his native village and to live in it part of the year. [769] The village of origin of each /20/ lineage is called "great village": [778] it is there that the members of the group meet to pray to the ancestors in front of the fraga tiki.

/20 cont./

613 We have said that the recently founded lineages, being of
571 only very small size, cannot constitute a distinct social unit and are placed under the authority of one of the lo heads. That is not a condition imposed by force or any moral coercion whatever, but a practical social necessity. A lineage, reduced in numbers though it may be, keeps in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks imprescriptible collective rights; and if these members agree to group in a separate village and work separate soil, nobody will stand in their way.

128 Such are the elements which stand out after a first study of
613 the kin groups as it can be deduced from interrogating the heads
614 of these units. It leaves unresolved some important problems:
115 The Boni have the idea that their kin groups are lineages
829 in the real sense of the term. Nevertheless, questioning on genealogies does not permit all to /21/ go back to the founding ancestress. Three of them, the most important numerically, prove in this respect to be divided into several fractions. Can we be sure that these fractions are actually of the same origin and that the people concerned are not deceiving themselves in believing it? In the social structure of the Refugee Blacks are there no mechanisms leading toward assimilation, to fusion of groups of heterogeneous origin?

We cannot answer these questions directly. First of all it is indispensable to study the conception that the Boni have of kinship ties within the matrilineage. Then we shall examine the genealogical tables of the various lineages, and for those that the study of genealogies shows to be divided into several fractions, we shall study the interrelations of these fractions.

601 Kinship within the matrilineage: The kinship terms translate a
613 purely classificatory system. The principle of classificatory kinship

/37 cont./

583 (this was especially the case with the Afi and Toïna lineages
591 cited above), that does not entail any compensation. It is contrary to custom and disapproved of, but if the wife absolutely insists on leaving her kin she is free to do it. Nothing can be claimed from her husband's lineage.

The usual interpretation of matrimonial compensation, regarded as a mechanism for exchange of women among groups, thus does not seem valid here. If a woman leaves a Boni lineage for good to go and found a family, for example among the Djuka, her descendants are lost to the lineage without any possibility of compensation. Yet this society so deeply rooted in African soil does not make provision for any allowance or payment in such a case.

613 Things are clearer if the lineage is considered not as an
771 effective material grouping but as a spiritual community subject
[829] to the same religious law. In the thought of the Refugee Blacks, the fundamental religious tie which joins the individual to his ancestors in uterine line cannot be broken whatever anyone does.

[591] Wherever she may go, the emigrant woman remains a mem-
[784] ber of the spiritual community; she remains, she and her children, subject to the same kunu. Nor can this religious tie be transferred from the maternal kin group.

581 Understood thus, marriage breaks no spiritual tie, creates
583 none; it thus affords no reason for any compensation.

000 These considerations show that the African "dowry" as conceived by patrilineal societies is not only a mechanism for the exchange of women among materially constituted groups. It can also have as its end, without those concerned even being aware of it, to compensate the spiritual community of the lineage for the loss of the children the woman will bear, their passage to another cult.

/42 cont./

601 128 So-and-so, and So-and-so, can be regarded as sure. On the other hand, we have considered that there was a break in the genealogy when, going back in time, we arrived at this single datum: Ma X... was the sister of Ma Y..., for it could be a question of kinship in the classificatory sense.

No form of birthright existing among the Boni, there is some uncertainty about the order of birth of brothers and sisters for persons long dead. We have adopted the order kept by oral tradition without trying to rectify it.

613 814 829 In many African populations a special tradition is connected with perpetuating the memory of the founder, at least his name, the place of his grave. With the present-day Boni absolutely nothing like this is found; they are not concerned in any way with the true foundress of their lineage; no memory, no legend, not even a name has come down to them. It even seems as though these distant ancestors interest them little because they are less able to act in behalf of their present-day descendants. Indeed, with each new generation the memory of an ancient one dies out.

193 [126] On our first trip in 1948 we called attention, unfortunately without noting them down precisely, to /43/ very interesting oral traditions going back to the time of slavery, especially the names of the slave-owners who showed themselves to be the most cruel. In [814] 1952 the last old man who knew them had died; the very memory of what he had said was already effaced.

829 602 As a matter of fact, Boni thought, strictly practical and utilitarian, is concerned principally with keeping the memory of the part of the genealogy indispensable to the living to know their kinship ties. Memory of women whose posterity has died out and of men who did nothing remarkable is dead from the second generation on.

114 613 Since none of the travelers of the 19th century understood the importance of taking genealogies, it is probable that the names

/63 cont./

571 626 156 [8] 367 that he can protect himself only by submitting to the law of the group. In this doubtless must be seen the deep reason for the importance attached to death and mourning, events around which is centered the activity of the usual societies and which entail a veritable mobilization.

626 771 It would be very difficult to condense the custom of the Refugee Blacks into a rigorous code. If one wished to do it, one would have to write as Article 1: "The living will conform to the will of the gods and the ancestors as it is expressed through the mouths of those possessed and by the movements of the bearers of the dead."

613 619 Each one of the tribes of the Refugee Blacks is formed of a certain number of matrilineages.

There is no limit on the number of these lineages, and it can be asserted that if any lineage whatever, detached from another tribe, asks to live in the midst of the Boni, it will be welcomed. From the first generation the children consider themselves as Boni.

In this regard one can cite the example of the Awara Bakka 3 lineage and that of the small lineage founded in Boniville by a Djuka woman, wife of Grand Man Ochi. All her descendants consider themselves Boni. /64/

[829] [643] But only the great lineages which constituted the tribe at its origin are social units recognized by the grand man, and only their heads are called to be members of the council.

128 We shall study first the interior functioning of the lineage, then the institutions going beyond the framework of the lineages.

/70 cont./

643 613 In 1957 the Dikan lineage was practically extinct. There remained only Grand Man Difu and his elder brother Samalobi, very old.

[829] The present grand man does not know the genealogy of his lineage beyond his grandmother. /Fig. 14 appears here./ /71/

[648] At the death of Awensay it was Samalobi, eldest of Awensay's classificatory nephews, who was to be named; but the French administration thought they had to oppose it, judging him too old; he yielded with good grace.

613 [165] [554] Samalobi, the ancestor, the patriarch of the Boni, died in May, 1957 at over 100 years old. Although very weakened by his infirmities and nearly blind, he kept great prestige and no important decision was made without his consent.

173 The son of Apatu, companion of Crevaux, he had retained an exact memory of the explorer whom he had accompanied during part of his trip in 1877. It is thanks to his memories that Crevaux's prestige has remained so great on the Maroni.

643 692 578 The grand man judges without appeal disputes between members of different lineages. Truly serious affairs are extremely rare, if one keeps in mind that:

[613] [583] [582] --Disputes over the payment of dowry, paying it back in case of divorce, and the assignment of the children, which form the main part of the cases argued before ordinary African jurisdictions, do not exist among the Refugee Blacks;

643 613

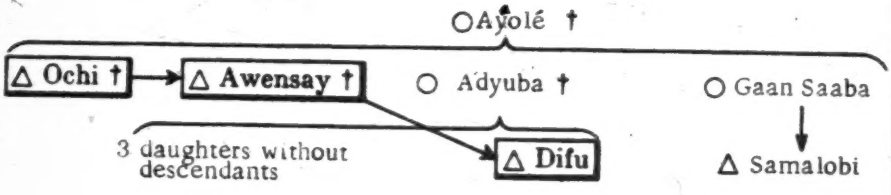

Fig. 14. Filiation of the last three grand men of the Boni.

/73 cont./

643 644 586 The present grand man, contrary to his predecessors, has only one wife. She is dressed like the other women and works at her clearing like everyone else, /74/ but her marriage to the grand man imposes special obligations on her: she can not divorce him; neither can he repudiate her.

643 829 The attitude of the Boni toward the grand man is a curious mixture of respect and disparagement. They regard him as the living symbol of their nation, and each one resents as if it were a personal insult an outsider having an incorrect attitude toward him. But their undisciplined spirit kicks up at the measures he is obliged to take to make them respect customary law, and even the authority of a poised and benevolent man like Grand Man Difu is not willingly accepted. As a matter of fact, the Boni stand for [754] [775] the authority of the grand man as they adhere to the worship of their gods, by the feeling of an absolute and inexorable necessity; in their minds the grand man is above all the priest of Odun; if the grand man were not there, they would be without defense against the wisiman, without recourse against the vengeance exercised by the yɔrka of the dead of other lineages.

The political power of the grand man is entirely based on these beliefs, and if they were to collapse, he would disappear [628] with them. Nobody would submit to any other law than that of the lineage, founded upon fear of the ancestors.

692 693 The lãnti kuutu. This is the assembly of the men, without distinction of age (1) or kinship; this council (lãnti = law) constitutes

> 1. There is no precise rule for fixing the age from which an adolescent may sit in this council. It is apparently when he has reached full physical development and earns his living by his own efforts, about 18 to 20 years. He does not have to be married.

[561]

the legal apparatus of the Boni.

/75 cont./

571 In fact, the society of the Refugee Blacks has not elaborated
771 true political institutions; it is essentially a grouping for collective
692 defense against suprahuman perils. The council, like the grand man, has power and authority only insofar as it remains closely bound to this function.

511 Absence of subordination. Among the Refugee Blacks no privileged
[565] class exists, /76/ and they all face life on a footing of rigorous equality; all receive the same education, must cultivate the soil,
[554] build their boats and houses, and live by paid work. The differences in standard of living observed from one to another stem basically from intelligence and work; and that, in spite of the belief in the possibility of getting rich by sorcery, is clearly understood by all.

565 Although the Boni willingly engage in paid work for one
[465] another in transportation by boat, there exists no tendency toward the formation of a class of rich people and one of wage-earners.
571 No servants exist among them, and one observes in their mutual
461 relations no exploitation of the weak. Neither does one observe that
[357] a rich man tries to have done by another, for pay, the customary
[462] jobs he must carry out for the benefit of his wife (clearings, building of boats). This would be looked on with great disfavor. The grand
[643] man himself, if his grandson is not there to help him, goes himself to draw water from the river and he does it ostensibly, even though he has a constant concern for his prestige.

● 829 The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors are certainly at the base of this conception; for they have inspired in the Refugee Blacks a particular sense of human dignity which is not found to the same degree in Africa.

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829
366
[556]
[444]
[179]

/76 cont./

No form of trade (1) is traditionally observed among them,

1. Since 1954, one of them, enriched by boat transport, set up a food business at Kotika, but this is a man more than half "creolized" and one who established himself in the midst of Creoles.

this activity being for them manifestly tied to the idea of the exploitation of others; there is not even any market in the villages. 433 Each person produces, or finds among the people of his own lineage, 439 what food he needs; as for imported objects, the Boni buy them in the course of their trips from the coast traders. That plague of 571 African societies, pseudo-trade or parasitism, is unknown to the [735] Refugee Blacks. Just as one meets among them neither ragamuffins nor beggars, one perceives nothing nasty or low in their social relations.

In their collective life there is something aboveboard, clean, which strikes one on first meeting them and which one does not tire of admiring, the further one penetrates into the functioning of their institutions.

765 /182 cont./
(which is the case here), they wait still longer in order to be able to group the lifting of mourning for several dead people from the same village in a single ceremony. The unfolding of the rites shows that much more importance is attached to Béniti than to the two young boys; in fact, the ceremony is devoted almost exclusively to her.

765 621 613 [829] The mourning-lifting ceremonies in Boniville are particularly interesting, for this village includes members of five different lineages. The distribution of functions and duties allows one to better understand the thought of the Boni relative to social organization; the principle of residence plays the determining role. The ceremony takes place in the village where the dead people lived, whatever their lineage was. The burden of organization is divided up about equally among all the inhabitants of the village. The /183/ members of the lineages of the dead people living in other villages are present at the ceremony, but their contribution is much less important.

765 [251] On November 8 (day called busimã kɔm) at noon, the festival begins with the arrival of the buchiman who, the week before, had caught and dried fish for the festival.

The buchiman are put under the authority of ∠Tofioto (K). They are all volunteers (one who would excuse himself from rendering this service would lay himself open to being abandoned alone on the day when he would have to bear the weight of mourning for one of his near relatives). The main weight of mourning is borne by Boniville village. The people of the principal fraction of the Dju (Asisi village) furnish a rather large contribution as regards time spent fishing but symbolic as to the furnishing of tafia and imported foods.

[226] [251] [621] [613] These buchiman had been at work since October 25, catching and salting fish:

/191 cont./

What constitutes the religion of the Refugee Blacks is a synthesis of elements originating with various peoples of West Africa, especially the Ashanti, Agni, Mina, and Fon and also Congolese elements. This synthesis seems to have been born among the Saramaka, the first tribe formed at the beginning of the 18th century, and to have been adopted thereafter with modifications of detail by the Djuka, tribe created about 1760. The Boni, the last tribe formed, probably received these beliefs during the time of slavery which they spent under the tutelage of the Djuka, from 1815 to 1860. The beliefs of the Boni and those of the Djuka have an identical base; the rites and their effects on social life are exactly the same. Nevertheless, the Djuka, almost ten times more numerous, have been able to keep very differentiated conceptions and specialized cults, involving priests in the literal sense of the term.

The Boni have kept only the essentials, and many conceptions, especially the myths which serve as support for the whole tradition, are very much blurred among them.

The Boni like to imagine that Africans constitute only one nation, and that they have inherited in a lump the traditions and social forms of this nation. They know now (especially from having seen a good deal of the Senegalese riflemen of the 1937 French mission) that numerous tribes exist, but that has not shaken the veneration they have for Africa, source, for them, of all knowledge and all strength. However, almost nothing of the culture peculiar to each one of the great tribes has reached them; no name of an African nation has remained in their memory, and /192/ none of the languages of their land of origin has been kept (1); everywhere the vehicular language

1. One observes, however, that a certain number of disconnected details of African life have come down to them by oral tradition;

/198 cont./
167 754 old woman of 90, A..., who died in Asisi in January, 1957. Having lived with Creoles in her youth, she had come back to live in her native village for at least 30 years and had never given occasion for any unfavorable remark. Nevertheless, upon her death it appeared that she had wisi.

771 829 177 Attitude toward Christianity. The Refugee Blacks, who are acquainted better than one might believe with the conceptions of the populations in the midst of whom they live, have a clear feeling of the relationship which exists between their metaphysical and moral conceptions and those of Christianity. They think they worship the same god as the Christians, in a completely different way but just as sound. They have no animosity [797] whatever toward the Catholic and Protestant clergy, and most of them agree willingly to wearing crosses or medals. But they have not the least intention of abandoning their beliefs for that. They do not perceive the contradiction and do not understand that people might want to oblige them to choose.

851 171 165 797 [688] [273] [784] Like the Creole gold miners, they attach great importance to baptism, considered as an obia protective against the dangers of the bush. On Christmas, 1957 they were strongly impressed by the accidental death of a Djuka Christian living at the Kotika school. He refused to observe mourning for his wife according to the custom of the Refugee Blacks, and used to go to drink in the cabarets of the Creole villages. On Christmas evening, when drunk, he drowned himself. That was attributed to a suprahuman punishment. We heard /199/ the following reflection on this subject: "He was baptized and he drowned himself just the same. That is therefore not worth the trouble."

61 581 571 Actually, the matrilineal structure of the Refugee Blacks and their conception of marriage form an irreducible cleavage, which appears immediately as soon as one leaves the metaphysical conceptions to pass to the plane of practical living.

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784 613 [428] The kunu and Boni family life. It follows from the detailed examination we have just made of the situation of the various lineages that the transmission of the kunu within the uterine kin group is a rigorous law which suffers no exception whatever. [571] [602] The process of assimilation which permits in a certain measure, on the social plane, the integration of fragments of paternal kin (like Awara Bakka 3) into a group does not come into play here. [611] [829] Unity with respect to the kunu can therefore be regarded as a rigorous criterion of a common matrilineal origin. The Boni feel it as an obvious fact and in such a case it is the proof that comes to their minds: "We are of the same origin since we have the same kunu."

784 613 571 182 Thus the kunu appears as the principal cement of the unity of the groups. It opposes the dissociation of the lineages; this curse which weighs collectively upon a group and which can be exorcised only collectively is an iron bond which nothing can break. It obliges the Refugee Blacks to surmount their individualistic tendencies, their egoism which, if they acted freely, would soon have scattered them into a dust of [888] separate persons. In the face of adversity each one accepts with good grace obedience to the elders, who alone know how [672] to talk to the gods and appease them. Nobody ever is indignant or even surprised to be struck down for the offense of another; there is not a movement of revolt or hostility against the one who by his inattention or inconsiderateness has brought on misfortune. On this plane the members of a lineage feel like cells of a single body.

784 613 672 The collective legal responsibility of the members of a group in the domain of customary law flows from the kunu. We have observed that several times, notably at the time of the obsequies for Kotoïda (Afi lineage) in October, 1956. The president of the lãnti kuutu condemned the members of

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787 626 182 571 But divination is more than that; the interpretation it gives of the events of daily life is the very mover of the animistic society; presenting calamities /236/ as the punishment of offenses against customary law, it is constantly vitalizing that law, conserving its practical value and its efficacity. What it expresses is not the hidden influence of chiefs or priests -- there are in fact neither chiefs nor priests among the Boni -- but the very consensus of the group, the deep feeling it has of its unity.

787 There are two large categories of divination:

The first consists of calling on a divinity through the medium of its bearer. For that, one applies to a person (of his [791] lineage if possible) who has a gadu. This is a service which is rarely refused. This person employs the appropriate procedure for calling his gita and enters into trances. The god speaks, the question is put to it; if it is well disposed, it may give the explanation or the advice requested. For example, one asks for advice before looking for another sector to make his clearings.

787 776 Suggestible as the Boni may be, they do not fail to perceive that all the gods interrogated do not give the same directions. So they think that certain ones are stronger than others; there are people whose gita is considered to be particularly [791] good, others whom they have stopped consulting entirely. The defunct head of Kotika village, Bayo, used to have a gita so remarkable that people would come from very far to consult it.

[829] [178] The general opinion is, furthermore, that nowadays everything is degenerating and that good gita are no longer seen as in the olden days.

787 [791] These consultations involve only a very modest remuneration, a bottle of tafia at most (1). If it is not a matter of a

1. The remuneration of the possessed person is in question; the god always demands a payment for itself, of variable size according to its whim.

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754 [774] [829] On this point it is taken for granted that Indian magic is much more powerful than African magic, and that any Indian is capable of attracting his enemy's akka.

--Transforming himself into a vampire (azemã) and flying at night in search of sleeping men in order to suck their blood and eat them in spirit; this conception, closely related to the one which the West Indians have of the soucougnan, comes from Dahomey (in Fon, aze = sorcery). It is said, as in Dahomey, that the azemã flies by emitting fire through the anus.

--Seni agi sani: this is what the Creoles call "sending bad baggage." This is acting upon a living being or an inanimate object to make it behave in abnormal fashion at the expense of the enemy. For example, if someone is bitten by a snake or if a child is carried off by a tiger, the action of a wisimã will be blamed first, for normally snake and tiger do not attack. But there is no material limit to the action of the wisimã, who can make a branch fall on his enemy's head or make a cartridge of dynamite burst prematurely.

[825] The idea that the sorcerer may transform himself into a jaguar, dog, or other animal is not assumed by the Refugee Blacks. Neither do they have the idea of brotherhoods of sorcerers.

754 695 How does society defend itself against the wisimã? There is first of all the test oath. At regular intervals, every two or three years for example, the grand man gathers together all the Boni to the last man before Odun's chapel, and makes each one drink a little of a magic liquid while inviting him to utter the formula: ɛfu mi e meki wisi fu dede a sama, mi mu dede: If I do sorcery to make someone die, I must die. This is what is called diŋgi sweri, to drink the test. Actually, it is a harmless liquid, but each one is convinced that a wisimã would not be able to drink it without dying from it. If someone stubbornly refuses to present himself at the ceremony, he is not obliged to, but he has denounced himself: suspicions will be directed on him henceforward.

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461 829 431 On the material plane the same conception explains the high importance attached to fair payment for work done, the holy fury which takes possession of Refugee Blacks who consider themselves wronged; it also explains why they can interpret a free gift only as a mark of weakness except in exceptional cases (present given by a high official on the occasion of a visit). A gift which does not have the character of an exchange has no spiritual value for them; it brings only scorn and near hostility, for they feel that the object has not been legitimately acquired and that they are not in tune with their moral law.

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Local Divinities

776 823 The Refugee Blacks assume the existence of local divinities exercising a de facto power on such-and-such a portion of the country. Since their very special mode of life leads them to circulate almost exclusively along rivers, with them this idea has been transposed into a double notion: the divinities of the rivers and the gods of the soil. In their minds those are two entirely separate conceptions: the power of the god of the soil stops at the edge of the water and conversely.

De facto worship is rendered the divinities of the river according to the rites set by the first users of the river. In practice, worship is rendered only to the divinities of dangerous rivers where accidents are frequent. People do not bother with the others.

These gods are designated indiscriminately by the words gadu and sani (thing, being), indicating that their nature is not known.

/265 cont./

796 "Great ancestors who are in God's country, it is you who
769 have the strength of the village."
539 (The tafia gushes forth.)

"Drink, drink, but do not get drunk to the point of being deluded, look with favor upon the righteous, scatter the wicked."

796 Next, Fintiman goes off to make an offering of tafia
782 accompanied by a few words at the chapel of Odun. Then he goes to the edge of the mortuary shed to pour water, tafia, and coffee on behalf of Samalobi, the grand man's brother, for whom mourning has not been lifted.

He goes next to the house of the deceased grand man Awensay to make an offering of coffee (Awensay, like the other grand men, used to drink coffee).

796 The prayer of the preceding year (January 1, 1957),
782 presided over by grandfather Samalobi, had had a higher
• 829 inspiration. After praying in about the same terms as above for the Boni, they prayed for the Djuka, explaining that in days gone by Boni and Djuka had fought, but that all that was forgotten. They prayed next for the Saramaka, then for the Indians, finally for the Europeans. I asked why; they answered: "It is because the Europeans were the ones who brought us to this country which has become ours." /p. 266 is blank/

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CHAPTER VIII

538 765

TALES -- PROVERBS

Tales (Anɛ̃si tɔli) and Proverbs (ɔdo) retain an important social function among the Refugee Blacks. It is always by tales that the great customary ceremonies of the lifting of mourning begin. Their function is to concentrate the attention of the

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He hunted (to feed the snake), caught small fish for it. One day the snake (which had grown) said to him: "Pikinbaya, I don't want to stay any longer in this brook. Take me to a big river." The snake went down the brook, Pikinbaya walking along the bank. They went down until... they came to a big creek. The snake stayed there. The boy went away but came back (regularly) to see the snake. He used to hunt for it and bring it meat. The snake grew bigger! It became adult. One day when he had come to see it, it told him: "Pikinbaya! I want to go to the river, I want to feed on fish like other snakes." It went downstream, Pikinbaya walked along the bank until... they had arrived at the river. The snake said: "Well, Pikinbaya, I am going away."

(A confused and boring passage follows. It takes Pikinbaya along to the village of the snakes and gives him a talisman enclosed in a pot, which will guarantee him luck and prosperity.)

....Pikinbaya stayed there until... he understood that it would come back no more. He set out on the path, walked, walked until he came to his village. His family was poverty-stricken. They did not even have any more salt to eat. The boy arrived. He hung the pot on a cashew apple tree /pommier cajou/.

(Immediately Pikinbaya's village became prosperous.)

Comrades! Even Paris was not so rich as it. Big ships came alongside Pikinbaya's village.

Now this country was governed by a king who was very rich; he said to himself: "That astounds me, Pikinbaya is richer than I. All my workmen leave me to go to him. He pays up to ten florins a day(1). I am going to send my eldest daughter to

[829]

1. The Refugee Blacks cannot imagine a king otherwise than as a boss paying his workmen.

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426 here, 5,000 there. But these loans are never large and do not constitute an effective process for grouping financial assets.

159 525 The so-called subscription societies so common in Black Africa are totally contrary to the thinking of the Refugee Blacks, in the same way as games of chance. In 1958 the Maripasoula post, on the occasion of a festival, had organized a tombola. When the principle of it was explained to the Boni, they were unanimous in thinking that the Europeans had odd amusements. Few of them agreed to buy tickets, and the ones who had not won anything left embittered, with the feeling of having been involved in an immoral operation.

159 571 High esteem attached to contracts. This inaptitude for forming groups and combining assets contributes very much toward crystallizing the society of the Refugee Blacks in its present form by opposing all large-scale initiative. On the other hand, it develops the sense of personal responsibility. The Refugee Blacks are especially strict with respect to money (1).

159 597 426

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1. This with regard to their mutual relations; as for debts to Europeans, they are not prompt in paying them back; but marked deception, borrowing done for the purpose of swindling, are very rare with the Refugee Blacks.

[829] Custom lays down as a strict principle that everything must be paid for. No one may live at the expense of someone

[613] else, no one may borrow without paying back. If a man died before repaying a debt, the members of his lineage would club together to pay it off.

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159 Wishing to take advantage of all the possibilities which
464 turn up, the Refugee Blacks are led to learn simultaneously the
463 traditional techniques of their group, boating, boat-building, felling of trees, squaring of wood, and /building/ framework. In these techniques they may be considered specialized workers.

157 Proud of their strength and knowledge, sure of themselves,
812 the Refugee Blacks are never worried about the future and consider life as an exciting adventure, ceaselessly bringing new things. If the past year has been bad, the new year will be better, with God's help. Nobody doubts that he will find gainful work again.

152 Influence of jealousy: absence of specialized professions and
182 trade. Another strong psychological tendency having a direct influence on the economy is jealousy.

152 The effect of jealousy, and the fear of jealousy, is to
828 limit enrichment and to maintain a de facto equality: it often
556 happens that talented people forego undertaking profitable work
753 in order not to give occasion for the jealousy which would render
799 their position in the village difficult and might draw misfortunes upon them; for people have the idea that jealousy draws down illnesses and calamities upon him who is the object of it and on his near relatives, by the action of a natural force, even without sorcery being formulated.

754 Fear of sorcery interferes in the same way; one who be-
556 comes unusually rich is almost inevitably accused of being a
441 sorcerer and may be obliged to leave the country. Particularly
829 vulnerable are those, very rare, who engage in trade. People do not suspect of sorcery a man who is seen to become rich by /292/ working ceaselessly. But the trader whose wealth increases without his furnishing obvious work, is quickly regarded as a "committed one," accused of having his good luck as a result of a pact with the devil.

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754 556 441 438 366 In that can doubtless be seen the most likely explanation of the absence, in the tribes of Refugee Blacks, of any internal trade. There are not even markets in the villages. In practice only Creole and Asian traders are patronized.

463 829 [438] The repugnance which the Refugee Blacks have for trading with one another contributes toward preventing the development of specialized professions among them. Specialization does actually exist: one man is particularly good at building boats, another is a competent carpenter, still another devotes himself mainly to fishing; but the Refugee Blacks exercise these specialties with respect to other peoples and not with respect to one another. Nobody fails to build his own boat, his house, to cut his clearings himself. If it were otherwise, classes and castes would rapidly be created, and that is precisely what the moral law of the Refugee Blacks condemns. A special effect 463 829 593 182 461 of this conception is to preserve family custom from deteriorating, by preventing the rich from becoming great polygamists maintaining idle mistresses. We have never heard it said that a richer man paid someone to perform for him the customary work he owes to his wives, clearings, house, boat. Whatever his wealth may be, he continues to do these jobs by the sweat of his brow, and that contributes toward maintaining in its meaning and value the tacit contract concluded between husband and wife.

182 157 433 648 Thus the geographic conditions, associated with influences of a social and psychological order, impose on the Refugee Blacks a unique economy, based on a symbiosis with the coast populations in the form of piece-work or temporary wage-earning.

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Relations with the Other Populations

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The tribes of Refugee Blacks do not constitute a closed world. They have lived since their formation in close symbiosis with the neighboring populations: autochthonous Indians, Europeans, and Creoles. Their traditions and their conception of life have been strongly influenced by these, not because they have lost anything of their interior unity, but because they have accepted, at least collectively, the idea that they have bonds and duties toward other men.

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Just as their economy on the material plane is based on exchange, so they consider the symbiosis of their group with the neighboring groups as the normal order of the universe. The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors have given them an extreme horror of violence; they consider peace a precious blessing common to all nations, and their moral principles which forbid harming anyone extend to all men. It is clear that these notions are less clearly understood on the individual level and that there are, as elsewhere, some thefts and abuses of trust. But, on /293/ the collective level, the relations between the Refugee Blacks and their neighbors are established on a base of trust, loyalty, and honesty not found to the same degree in Africa.

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Relations with the other tribes. The Boni do not have any well-defined political ties with the other tribes of Refugee Blacks, but the grand men have semiofficial relations through the medium of messengers, and consult one another rather frequently.

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The Boni have harbored a tenacious resentment against the Djuka for having in former times allied themselves with the Dutch against them, but this resentment, chiefly collective in nature, has died down with time; it does not prevent individual relations from being cordial.

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619 829 The Saramaka are very highly esteemed everywhere, for it is unanimously assumed that their magic is stronger, their techniques more perfected, than those of the other tribes.

175 648 Relations with the Indians. The relations between the Boni and the Oayana Indians are extremely curious and interesting. They were probably established from the end of the 18th century on. Several writers have stated that Boni and Indians fought each other for a long time, the examination we made of authentic archive documents, unfortunately few in number, capable of throwing light on the history of the Maroni, does not confirm this hypothesis (1). One can think on the contrary that symbiotic

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1. The only combats pointed out took place about 1840 between the Boni and the Wayakulé "Oyaricoulets" Indians, a very primitive tribe who lived on the Oulémari and was itself at war with the Oayana.

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The Boni were certainly already allied with the Oayana at the time of the battles on the Maroni in 1793, since after their defeat the survivors, grouped around Agosu son of Boni, took refuge on the Maruini River which they went up as far as the region of its sources, where nobody could catch up with them. Now it was precisely there that the Oayana Indians were living at the end of the 18th century. They would not have tried this maneuver if they had not had the certainty of finding refuge

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with their allies. The sites of their villages, marked on Coudreau's map (1888) are in immediate proximity to those of former Oayana villages.

175 648 [643]

relations must have been created rapidly and in a very natural fashion. The grand man of the Boni is in a way the suzerain of the Indian chiefs; this situation was not imposed by force; it results from the privileged situation of the Boni on the river, which until recent times obliged the Indians to deal through them in order to trade with the outside world.

Although the Boni took advantage of this situation in days gone by to impose arbitrary rates of exchange upon the Indians, this relation must not be imagined as the exploitation of conquered by conqueror. It is based on the absolute respect of each group for the beliefs and social structure of the other, and an activity for each befitting its inclination. The proverb says: "To the Boni the river, to the Indians the forest." Thus it is that the Boni traditionally buy arrows from the Indians, while the latter buy paddles from them; the meaning of this symobl is perfectly understood by both.

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Marriages between the two groups, without being forbidden, are regarded as contrary to custom (2).

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2. The marriage of Grand Man Awensay to an Indian woman about 1915 was inspired by complex motives. Toward the end of his life, Awensay could no longer stand the Boni, his imperious personality putting up badly with their individualism and their taste for discussion. He had established the Indian country a farming habitation in which he lived nearly all

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418 It seems that in these relations, both bring more patience and tolerance to bear than toward the people of their own group. It is excessively rare to see disputes arise between Indians and Boni, when there sometimes are some within each group.

186 The feelings which the Boni have toward the Indians are complex: they feel superior in physical strength, effectiveness, and organization; they make fun of the Indians' puerile eagerness for beads and jewelry, of the begging attitude of certain ones among them. But they admire them for their cleverness, their intimate knowledge of the forest, and fear them for the supernatural powers they attribute to them. Sure of themselves, fearing nothing from the bush, never getting lost, unrivalled hunters and fishermen, the Indians appear to them to be endowed with unique faculties which other men do not possess. We have happened to hear in camp reflections such as this: "It is going to rain, the Indians are making shacks."

829 The Boni feel an intense fear of Indian magic. Not one
829 of them would dare to seriously displease an Indian, and even
152 if he feels he has been wronged, in most cases he will not dare complain (1).

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1. In the search for the magic causes of death, it happens that divination may incriminate the action of an Indian medicine man. In such a case the legal action of the Boni is extinguished, for the principle is that the Indian medicine man does not hurt anyone without a reason. It is considered that the deceased must have gravely injured him and that he deserved his fate.

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648 A picturesque incident once more showed us this attitude in the course /295/ of a circuit on the Litani in 1952. When [262] we passed through Aloïké village, our four Boni boatmen, who had killed some coumarou, had prepared a very appetizing dish for themselves; they had scarcely begun to eat when several Indians arrived unexpectedly who joined in the conversation, sat down beside them, then began to dip their spoons into the pot. Other Indians came and, continuing to talk things over deliberately and without hurrying, came and took their share of the feast. The Boni were progressively pushed back to the [152] second row and finally gave up. Three of them laughed about [829] this incident which was familiar to them; the fourth was furious but he did not dare say anything, for, said he to us, if he struck the Indians as he wanted to, he risked being bewitched.

648 In truth, what is the nature of the authority that the grand 643 man of the Boni is supposed to exercise over the Indians? Does it involve precise obligations, a tribute, vexatious measures? Not in the least: it is reduced nowadays to two things:

--The principle of the obedience of the Indian village heads to the person of the grand man;

--The interdiction of transport by boat in the Boni fashion.

One can only approve of this interdiction which protects the Indians more than it harms them. As for the personal influence of Grand Man Difu, it is extremely favorable; he has a profound knowledge of the language and customs of the Indians, toward whom he has always exhibited an interest and sympathy which are certainly sincere. When, during the ceremonies at the fraga tiki, he appeals to the ancestors to ask them to watch over the Boni, he does not fail to add: gaã yɔɔka, de mu luku de lĩgi: Ancestors, watch over the Indians.

648 It is also said of the Boni that they are interested in the Indians only in order to traffic with them. Even if that were true -- we have shown how inexact this assertion was -- we should hold all the same that it is much less dangerous for the

/295 cont./

648 Indians to trade with them than with the Europeans and Creoles; the Boni are a graded society in which things tend to take place according to well-defined norms. It suffices to compare the Oayana Indians, who have kept the essentials of their civilization, with the Indians of the Oyapok to be convinced that the Boni have protected the former much more than they have oppressed them.

[464] Relations with the Creoles. The Boni are in constant contact with Creole gold miners and traders, for the benefit of whom they carry out many kinds of work (boating, tree-felling, construction). Most of them speak the Creole dialect very well and are well informed on the Creole type of life.

[191] [829]

On the whole, relations between the two groups are good.

[829] On the Upper Maroni, it is mainly a matter of Creoles of African blood, who have come from the British West Indies, whom the Boni do not consider to be extremely different from themselves. Many have been settled there for a very long time, and individual friendships have become established; yet the two groups have not the least tendency to merge.

/296/ The Creoles have only scorn for the civilization of the Refugee Blacks, which reminds them of a detested African past. They have a feeling of superiority and do not cease exhorting the Boni to adopt their clothing and way of life.

829 The feelings that the Boni have toward the Creoles are complex; they clearly perceive that the activity of the gold miners is artificial and that isolated people are incapable of living by their own efforts in the midst of this pitiless forest. When they have become old and sick, the gold miners experience the worst distress and literally die of hunger until they are

888 evacuated to the hospice of Saint Laurent. Among the Refugee Blacks, old men are assured of a decent life in the midst of the members of their lineage, who surround them with affectionate respect.

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888 829 This is a point of view which has great importance in the eyes of the Boni, for whom finishing one's days at the hospice or being reduced to asking for the help of outsiders constitutes the worst downfall.

829 They fear, moreover, as we have shown, Creole magic which they liken to a form of wisi.

On the other hand, they are impressed by the attainments of the Creoles, the real spirit of initiative and the strong personality of some of them; moreover, the Boni who have been to Cayenne have noticed the solicitude of the administration 829 177 178 [114] with respect to the population of the communes. For all these reasons there exists among the Boni a certain body of opinion in favor of creolization. But the very unique type of life of the Boni and their desire to keep their special customs attach them to their ancestral form of life; about 1890 the explorer Coudreau, observing the same facts, was predicting imminent creolization of the Boni. In fact, this did not happen, and it is unlikely to.

648 464 Traditional relations with Europeans. The Refugee Blacks constitute an important element in the economic life of the Guianas; on behalf of the administration and European enterprises they perform many jobs (boating, wood-floating, tree-felling). 648 461 [465] They are not well adapted to other kinds of work, but in these activities which fit with their traditional mode of life they are equal if not superior to any labor. Very highly paid, they work with speed, effectiveness, and intelligence, exhibiting an initiative and sense of duty not commonly found in Africans(1).

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1. It is to be noted that if they stop leading their traditional kind of life, for example if they settle permanently near European establishments, they rapidly lose these qualities.

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648 So relations between the Europeans and Refugee Blacks have nothing in common with what one observes in Africa: one notes their faults without indulgence, but one admires them for their strong personality, their art, and their techniques, and one bears an esteem for them which is not feigned.

• 829 The Refugee Blacks feel neither hate nor jealousy toward Europeans. This /297/ may surprise one at first, for they have had to put up with cruel wars fought against them, which have left a precise memory with them; but the explanation is simple: the Boni have no hate because their life is happy, and they have no jealousy because they do not try to imitate the Europeans and are satisfied with their own civilization.

173 186 On this subject it will be noted that the Refugee Blacks recall the time of slavery without shame and without any inferiority complex; this is simply because they do not have the feeling of being the descendants of slaves; they feel themselves to be the descendants of warriors who imposed their independence by force of arms; the Djuka, exaggerating to themselves the scope of the successes won by their ancestors, even have a certain superiority complex. Proud of their ancestors, the Refugee Blacks do not feel in any way inferior to the white man and behave toward him as equal to equal.

648 [184] The Boni, like the Djuka and the Saramaka in Surinam, live under a de facto regime which is equivalent to internal autonomy. This regime was instituted for the Boni from their first contact with the French administration in 1861; it has always been associated with perfect loyalty.

The French administration, which until recent times did not have any permanent establishments in the interior of the country, has never tried to interfere with the interior functioning of the tribes which went on and still goes on according to their own law. The Refugee Blacks have thus been spared that hybrid jurisdiction, applying a customary law altered by European ideas,

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648 which in Black Africa has so powerfully contributed toward the destruction of traditional structures.

[829] Truth to tell, the problem was simpler, for the conceptions of the Refugee Blacks, involving no form of oppression of individuals and assuming the right of the woman to self-determination, reduce to the vanishing point the sources of disputes between individuals and groups.

[162] In 1946 the administrative post of Maripasoula was created, near the confluence of the Lawa and the Inini. Since that time, the gendarmerie has administered to the satisfaction of all and without any incident a heterogeneous population of 2,000 persons, gold miners, Refugee Blacks, and Indians, scattered over [743] a vast territory. The medical post created at Maripasoula in 1949 is very much frequented by the Boni and performs an extremely useful function on the psychological as well as on the social level.

The relations of the various groups give rise to very small frictions, one with another, but the Refugee Blacks never give occasion for intervention in the internal affairs of their groups. [505] Respectful of the administration, they carry out punctually their commitments to their employers, insuring all the transport on the river according to a modus vivendi established for a long time (1).

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On this subject it is to be noted that disagreeable incidents occur each time the Boni deal with inexperienced travelers who do not know the customs of the river or do not wish to apply them. In a general way the Refugee Blacks, of their own accord respectful of anyone who comes to do a useful job, loathe tourists; they cannot stand being photographed or observed like queer animals.

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Never do they appeal to the courts to settle their differences, still less their family quarrels; never do they beg for help.

The Europeans' material superiority does not impress them: the whites are more able in mechanics, but they are more able in magic, that is all. The efficacy of European medicine does not shake their convictions: if someone has reasons to believe himself victim of the anger of a gadu, he begins by making the sacrifices intended to appease it, then asks it for authorization to have himself cared for by the whites. Personally we have never done anything to disabuse the Boni of this idea which satisfies at the same time the requirements of medicine and those of social discipline, for it must not be forgotten that for them sickness is punishment for an offense. Thus one sees that unless it is deliberately brought to bear against tradition and against the leaders, the influence of Europeans is without appreciable effect on the civilization of the Refugee Blacks. It is no longer the same when contacts become too frequent, tend to alter drastically the way of life, and especially when these influences become openly "civilizing."

The Future of the Refugee Blacks

Obliged to solve all the problems of life by their own means, the Refugee Blacks have been able to adapt with intelligence to the evolution of the modern world, and their custom has kept all its vigor and effectiveness. Their future would not seem to be threatened if a wave of opinion had not come to the surface these past years, in French Guiana as well as in Surinam, to destroy their civilization, deemed primitive and barbarous, and to fuse them into the population of the coast. This result would be obtained in particular by schooling and evangelization.

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114 Here desirous of remaining on the plane of strict scientific objectivity, we shall avoid entering the discussion of the benefit springing from this action, which, moreover, would necessitate a long development. We shall limit ourselves to showing that it appears to us to be doomed to failure.

871 177 --The experiment of schooling has been made for more than 30 years among the Boni in the village of Kotika. Half a dozen children, doing well in their studies, left for Surinam and broke with their native group. In the others, the teaching received left only faint traces. As a matter of fact, there is no room in a normal intelligence to receive at the same time the mass of technical knowledge necessary for holding one's own in the society of the Refugee Blacks and ordinary school instruction. One necessarily drives out the other; now the Boni [829] are extremely fond of their free life on the great river, which assures them very satisfactory material conditions of living.

797 177 184 --Evangelization has been carried on with perseverance for more than 200 years with the Refugee Blacks of Surinam. It has not given appreciable results. It has been the same in French Guiana with the action carried on with the Saramaka working /299/ near the communes of the coast (1), and more recently with the Boni of the Upper Maroni.

[648] 1. The Saramaka not only have no tendency to be converted, but they exert a significant influence on the population of the communes. On the Oyapok the Saramaka healer [756] [787] has numerous clients, and in spite of the clergy's interdiction, many women go to the possession dances of the Papa gudu serpent gods.

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771 The Boni, as we have shown, do not feel that they are pagans. They think they worship the same god as the Christians, in a different way but just as valid; they feel that their moral principles are not inferior to those of the Christians, that they are expressed in practice by the same prescriptions and are in fact better obeyed(2).

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2. We report here faithfully the point of view of those concerned without making any judgment of its worth; let us recall that their principles of living do not assume any moral conscience in the individual and rest entirely upon the fear of material punishments in the present life. But even this base gives them great practical effectiveness.

• 829 Only in their conception of their kinship and the family, in the absence of family life based on the indissolubly united couple, do they recognize that they live under another law. But they do not fail to notice that the populations of the Guianas who profess Christianity hardly put it into practice in their family life: the stability of marriages is appreciably greater among the Refugee Blacks.

787 796 828 As for the cults of possession, the Boni feel that they worship de facto entities whose existence appears as tangible to them as light or weight to us. These ideas are bound up with a characteristic way of perceiving, touching deep zones of the mind which reasoning does not reach (3).

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3. Actually, it is observed in Black Africa that where cults